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MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY

OF THE

SONS OF THE REVOLUTION.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

On the 30th of March, a few gentlemen met at the State House, by invitation of W. O. McDearth, Esq., of Newark, New Jersey, who represented the Society of the "Sons of the Revolution" of that State. He frequently told us of the objects of the organization, of its growth in his own and other States, and so impressed us with the importance of organizing such a society in the Commonwealth which holds Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, that a committee was appointed to arrange for a general meeting of the descendants of "heroes of the Revolution." Such a meeting was held in Tremont Temple, April 19. The attendance was large beyond expectation, and the meeting enthusiastic. There were present nineteen own sons of Revolutionary sires, grandsons, great-grandsons, great-great-grandsons, and a few lady descendants. The plan of organization, with Constitution and By-Laws, as proposed by a committee, was unanimously adopted, and officers elected, as given below, to serve until the annual meeting, June 17. The fee for membership was fixed at \$1.00, and for annual dues at \$2.00. Other matters necessary in completing the organization were referred to the Board of Managers.

The Board of Managers met at the Quincy House, April 24. Among the important items of business transacted at this meeting were these, viz., Rev. Henry S. Huntington, of Dorchester, was elected chaplain; L. L. Tarbell of Marlboro, registrar, and John M. Cushing of Duxbury, director, to fill a vacancy. It was also voted to hold a celebration in connection with the annual meeting, June 17, with addresses and dinner, the expense to be borne by the treasury. Also to instruct the registrar to advertise, to the end that all descendants of Revolutionary sires, however remote their connection, be made acquainted with their privilege of joining the Society; also to procure a suitable diploma, to be given to each member, etc., etc.

I have thus concisely given the steps which have led up to the issuing of this circular, which is sent for the information of all into whose hands it may fall. And now I urgently request that every reader of this will send me the address of sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, great-great-grandsons, and great-great-great-grandsons, and there are many of these classes, especially of the second and third class in every man's line of descendants, that I may correspond with them at once. All such persons should have the opportunity of becoming members of the Society prior to the celebration in June. It will readily be seen that no sinister motive prompts the above request, or inspires the exhortation to join us. To succinctly show the objects of the organization, I quote from the Constitution, which accords with those of other States, as follows:—

ARTICLE III.

The purpose of the Society is to keep alive among ourselves and our descendants the spirit of patriotism, in those who in military, naval, or civil service, by their acts or example, dedicated America to Freedom, and to secure for preservation the manuscript rolls, records, and other documents relating to the War of Independence, and to promote social intercourse and good feeling among its members now and hereafter.

ARTICLE IV.

Any person shall be eligible for membership in the Society who is "a descendant of an ancestor who was a President of Massachusetts, and who is descended from an ancestor who served as a member of the Legislature of the State, or as an official or recognized subordinate in the service of any one of the thirteen original Colonies, or the United States, or the National Government representing or composed of those Colonies or States, assisted in establishing American Independence during the War of the Revolution, or the descendant of such a Massachusetts ancestor who, after his residence, and no person except him, shall be eligible for membership in the Society."

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ARTICLE V.

The officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Registrar, a Historian, a Delegate-at-Large, and a Delegate to the National Society for each 100 or fraction of 100 exceeding 50 members, provided that each Society shall be entitled to at least one Delegate-at-Large and one Delegate, and a Board of Managers, consisting of those officers *ex-officio*, and fifteen other members. The President, Vice-President, and the members of the Board of Management shall be ineligible for re-election as their own successors.

To still further emphasize the importance and illustrate the objects of this Society, I quote from an eloquent address of J. C. Pumelly, a distinguished member of the New Jersey Society:—

"In this, the Centennial year of the formation of our government, this movement seems especially wise and appropriate, and from this day forth we shall make it our aim to collect and receive for preservation the genealogical record of every one who joins our ranks, manuscript rolls, and other documents relating to the War of the Revolution, and to inspire as far as we can in the breasts of our people the patriotic spirit which animated the souls of our forefathers.

"Whether a Revolutionary ancestor bore the sword or the musket, belonged to the line, or militia, or otherwise aided the cause, each is equally honored. For was it not the brave minute-men, as the great commander himself said, who protected him and his decimated army with their picket line? The descendants of each are eligible to our ranks.

"Each old parish in our State has its heroes, and each old church was a shrine at which brave men and women bowed in God's fear, consecrating their all to their country.

"Let us see to it that the memories of all are preserved inviolate. To this end let our efforts be united and our influence inspiring and ennobling.

"As a Society having so worthy a cause, we, its members, must not only be descendants of heroes, but ourselves be worthy of the legacy those heroes have left us."

Well-informed statisticians say that there are probably upwards of one hundred thousand male persons in Massachusetts who are eligible to admission into this Society, and in view of the large prospective membership, and because of the smallness of the current expenses, the fees are made merely nominal, as given above. In answer to questions that I have received from numerous female descendants of Revolutionary sires, I may say that the formation of auxiliary societies, or "Daughters of the Revolution," or of an honorary membership, is proposed, but the plans are not yet perfected.

I enclose a blank application for membership, and shall forward one to every name I receive. These are to be filled as per sample annexed, and on their return to me with membership fee of one dollar, the name will be enrolled and a diploma will be sent. The filled application, with all the data, will be recorded upon the permanent register, a page of which will be given to each member for the record of any incidents connected with his ancestor. I quote from By-Laws:—

SECTION IX.

The Registrar shall keep a roll of members, and in whose hands shall be lodged all the proofs of membership qualification, and all the historical and geographical papers, manuscript or other, of which the Society may become possessed; and under the direction of such Board of Managers, shall keep copy of such similar documents as the owners thereof may not be willing to leave permanently in the keeping of the Society. Such Registrar, if practicable, shall be an officer of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

From the Registrar's books and papers, the Historian will be aided in his important work.

NOTE.—The Committee on Celebration and Dinner wish me to announce that a circular will be issued to all members about the first day of June, giving information as to time and place of meeting, dinner, speakers, etc. It will gratify those who have ever heard the president of the national organization, to learn that he has promised to be present on the occasion. I deem it proper to say that the Committee on Celebration contemplate inviting one speaker from each of the States, and at the National Convention of the organization in New York, April 30, speakers were invited, and will be duly announced.

OFFICERS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY.

President.—HON. CHARLES H. SAUNDERS.

Cambridge.

Vice-President.—HON. WILLIAM N. DAVENPORT.

Marlboro.

Secretary and Treasurer.—CLARENCE S. WARD.

Allston.

Registrar.—LUTHER L. TABBILL.

Marlboro.

Historian.—A. A. STOCKER, M. D.

Cambridge.

Chaplain.—REV. HENRY S. HUNTINGTON.

Dorchester.

Directors.

JOHN L. STEVENSON, Boston.
JOHN G. CRAWFORD, Clinton.
JOSHUA M. CUSHING, Duxbury.
GEO. A. COTTING, Hudson.
WM. H. PEARSON, Boston.
NATHAN L. RIVIERE, Worcester.
HON. PETER FAY, Southboro.

HON. H. H. COOLIDGE, Boston.
ANDREW H. WARD, Boston.
MARK J. FOLSOM, Cambridge.
WM. BARNES, Marlboro.
WILLIAM B. CLARKE, Boston.
CALVIN T. LADD, Dorchester.
A. B. FRYE, Boston.

GEO. W. BROWN, Lexington.

Requests for blank applications will be promptly complied with, and any information desired on points not touched upon here will be answered if possible.

To aid in filling the blank application for membership, I give herewith a copy of one that was among the first handed in, changing the names to avoid unwarranted personality, except the ancestor, whose name is historical: —

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, ss.

BOSTON, April 19, 1889.

William Brown Smith, being duly sworn, says that he is of the age of twenty-one years and upwards, and resides at _____; that he is the son of Augustus Smith and Louisa Clark Smith; that he was the son of Harriet Jane Smith and Christopher Smith; that she was the daughter of Hulda Brown and William Butler; that she was the daughter of Col. John Brown and _____; that I claim representation as the great-great-grandson of Col. John Brown, of Pittsfield, Berkshire County. He served conspicuously, and was killed at the head of his troops at Palatine, Montgomery County, N. Y., Oct. 19, 1780.

And deponent further says, that he claims admission to the Society of the "Sons of the Revolution," of Massachusetts, as a great-great-grandson of Col. John Brown.

WILLIAM BROWN SMITH.

Sworn to before me, this twentieth day of April, 1889.

[SEAL]

ARCHIBALD MUNAY HOWE.

Notary Public.

It will interest the members of the Massachusetts Society to learn the result of the convention of delegates from State organizations which met at Fraunces Tavern, corner of Pearl and Broad Street, New York City, April 30, and the following excerpts from newspaper reports will briefly give the information. The reporter does not put it too strongly in his characterization of the convention. The spirit of the occasion, the harmony and patriotic devotion evinced, the national tone of all the proceedings, regardless of sectional or party distinctions or preferences, were, if not a surprise, a delightful experience. As an instance of the prevalence of this spirit, I may say that in the nominations for President of the National Society, South Carolina named Ex-Gov. Robinson, and Missouri named Ex-Gov. Long, but as neither had been enrolled, they were ineligible.

I quote from report: —

"The meeting was one of the most notable and significant gatherings that New York will witness on this centennial week. The assembling of distinguished men from the several States, to organize a purely patriotic society, unmixed with political or religious dogmas as such, and without antagonizing such even by inference, was of itself strikingly impressive; but a convention of such men held on the one hundredth anniversary of Washington's inauguration, in the very room where just before that event, he bade farewell to his officers, was an event of sublime interest." "Rev. Timothy Dwight, D. D., LL. D., of Yale College, Conn., offered a fervent prayer at the opening, the entire company bowing their heads in solemn reverence." "W. O. McDowell, of New Jersey, was elected temporary chairman, and Lieut. J. C. Cresap, of Maryland, temporary secretary." "On assuming the chair, Mr. McDowell made an eloquent address, which gave the key-note to the convention, and was heartily applauded." I give brief extracts from it: —

"Over one hundred years ago, within these sacred walls, occurred a scene the like of which the world has never seen. Seven years of war, amid hardships untold, of discouragements without number, had been brought to a successful close.

"The last spot in this country occupied by the enemy had been evacuated. . . . That Washington had added to his other laurels that magnificent conquest over self in refusing a proffered crown, had become a part of history. Together for the last time as commander and commanded, the moment for farewell had come. With bowed heads, with hearts full of sadness, but at the same time cheered with the knowledge that the cause had been won, they listened to these words, as they fell from the lips of their loved commander: 'With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take



leave of you, most devoutly wishing that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former glorious and honorable." A few years passed. Another scene is taking place. The soldier, the leader is again in this city. It is April 30, 1889, the natal day of constitutional government in America. The city is decked as a bride waiting for the bridegroom. Once more throughout the world, the common man lifts up his head and hopes again. Again the cycle is complete; a hundred years have rolled around; and the descendants of the men who made Washington a possibility are gathered within these sacred walls. And, in the immortal words of that second Washington, we unite in saying: "Fifty years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. We, their children, have come to this sacred spot as worshippers to a shrine, not to consecrate, not to hallow it. The brave men whose deeds we commemorate have consecrated it far beyond our power to add or detract."

"It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here consecrated to the tasks before us, that from our honored dead we gather new zeal and holy inspiration to give our best energies to that cause to which they gave their last full measure of devotion. Let us here resolve that they shall not have fought in vain. That this nation, under God, shall to-day have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

"On motion of a son of a Revolutionary soldier from Massachusetts, seconded by a grandson from South Carolina, the organizing of a 'National Society of Sons of the American Revolution' was unanimously agreed to. For the better accommodation of the convention, by invitation of the president of the New York Produce Exchange, the further meetings of the convention were held in that building."

"For two days and a long night session the delegates, denying themselves of the festivities outside, labored in shaping the organization, and in a kindly, fraternal spirit the Constitution and By-Laws were framed, and an excellent board of officers elected."

Among the pleasant and auspicious episodes of the occasion was the receipt of letters and telegrams from the President of the United States regretting his enforced absence. Ex-President Hayes, Hon. Hamilton Fish of New York, the President of the French Republic nominating a descendant of Lafayette as Vice-President for France, and others.

Officers elected are as follows:—

President.—Hon. LUCAS P. DEMING, New Haven, Conn.

Vice-President at Large.—Wm. O. McDOWELL, Newark, N. J.

Vice-Presidents for States.—New York, Hamilton Fish; Pennsylvania, Gov. James A. Beaver; Indiana, Benjamin Harrison; President United States; South Carolina, Wade Hampton; New Hampshire, R. K. Slayton; New Jersey, Gov. R. S. Greene; Massachusetts, L. L. Tarbell; Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes; Alabama, G. B. West; Arkansas, Colonel Williams; Virginia, Fitz Hugh Lee; West Virginia, Bushrod C. Washington; Missouri, Governor Francis; Maine, C. H. Demison; California, Col. A. S. Hubbard; Connecticut, J. C. Kinney; Kentucky, Governor Buckner; Maryland, J. G. Morris; Vermont, Gov. William P. Dillingham; France, Senator de Lafayette, 72 Rue de Paris, Paris.

Secretary.—Lient. James C. Cresap, Maryland.

Assistant Secretaries.—G. L. Galloway, Greenville, South Carolina; Wilson L. Gill, Columbus, Ohio; Emery S. Willard, San Francisco, California; Treasurer, G. W. Paddock, St. Louis, Missouri; Registrar, Geo. W. S. Stryker, Trenton, N. J.; Chaplain, Rev. Timothy Dwight, D. D., LL. D., Yale College, Conn.

The President, Vice-President at Large, and Secretary were authorized to add Vice-Presidents for other States as fast as societies are organized in other States. April 30 was designated as the date for the annual meetings of the National Society, and it was tacitly agreed that the annual meeting for 1890 shall be held in Louisville, Ky., 1891 in Boston, and in 1892 in New York, subject to action of the Board of Managers.

Thus the "National Society of the Sons of the Revolution" was launched, and under the most promising auspices enters upon a career of boundless possibilities of blessing for our country. Let Massachusetts keep abreast with her sister States in that patriotism, zeal, and devotion which her hallowed memories inspire.

N. B.—Will the person receiving this, if not eligible to membership, kindly place it with a descendant, and in any case, send me names of descendants from among his acquaintances?

Sincerely,

L. L. TARBELL,

REGISTRAR S. A. R.

P. O. address, *Custom House, Boston,*
or Marlboro, Mass.

BOSTON, May 1, 1889.

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